GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:707
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2001
NATIONAL WATER POLICY
GANGASANDRA SIDDAPPA BASAVARAJ

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United Nations has warned the developing countries including India to evolve a National Water Policy toprevent water wars between nations;

(b) if so, whether any seminar under the auspices of United Nations was held in Bangalore on restoration of lakes and wastelands;

(c) the suggestions made at the seminar;

(d) whether India has agreed to implement the suggestions; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) Director-General of United Nations Environment Programmein one of the issues of Scientific Journal on Environmental Science and Technology and while addressing International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development in Paris on 21st March,1998 has predicted the possibility of wars being fought in future over the issue of water. However, India has already adopted a National Water Policy in 1987 for optimum utilization of its water resources in an integrated and environmentally sound basis.

(b) to (e) A symposium named "Lake 2000 − Restoration ofLakes and Wetlands" was held at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore during 27th − 29th November, 2000 which was sponsored by Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, Commonwealth o f Learning, Society ofWetlands Scientists and Indian Council o f Agricultural Research. A number of recommendations and suggestions were made in the symposiun. The seventeen recommendations made in the symposia are given in brief in the Annexure. The recommendations made in the various symposia are kept in view by the Government while formulating and implementing plans and policies relating to Lakes and Wetlands.

ANNEXURE

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONSIN BRIEF MADE INTHESYMPOSIUMHELDAT BANGALOREDURING 27TH −29TH NOVEMBEF 2000 NAMED "LAKE 2000 − RESTORATION OF LAKES AND WETLANDS"

1. The integration of different Government Agencies for effective implementation of activities related to restoration of wetlands, their sustainable utilization and conservation.

2. A National Committee for reclamation, restoration and development of Lakes and Wetlands be formed to formulated a National Policy to evolve strategies for sustainable utilization and conservation.

3. A Comprehensive Plan be prepared to study selective, representative wetlands in a phased manner to create a database with regard to their present status, sustainable use, management and conservation; and to formulate strategies for their long term management in rural and urban areas. Regular monitoring of ecosystems through the involvement of schools, colleges and universities to be taken up.

4. A Comprehensive Action Plan be chalked out immediately for taking care of health, disease and quarantine aspects of aquatic biota.

5. A Comprehensive action plan be chalked out to study the aquatic biodiversity of the inland water bodies of the nation.

6. Mass awareness programmes be chalked out and implemented through Government and Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) for recognition of the importance of the lakes, wetlands and rivers and their role in the sustenance of human civilization and the aquatic biodiversity.

7 Lakes and Ponds in each Zilla Panchayath area be identified and their streams recharged through people's participation.

8. Temporary Ponds be identified and their diversity explored to delineate their contribution to the society and biosphere.

9. A people's watchdog team to be set up to stop the dumping of wastes into water bodies and the catchment area protection.

10. Fishermen's socio-economic aspects to be taken into consideration while formulating wetland policies.

11. Students involvement including curriculum development concerning the protection of the ecosystem.

12. Ownership and the legal status of lakes be properly defined.

13. Easy access to data be provided to scientists and students to investigate the status of wetlands in protected areas.

14. Introduction of exotic fishes into lakes be permitted only after clearance from fishery experts.

15. Education and Training: Public needs to be better informed about the rationale, goals and methods of aquatic ecosystem restorations. Scientists and researchers need to be trained in aquatic ecosystem restoration, management and conservation.

16. The Central and State Governments should support research and development, watershed/scale restorations that integrate lake, stream and wetland components. State agencies, NGOs and university researchers should participate in planning, implementing and evaluating restoration projects.

17. Goals for restoration of lakes be realistic and be based on the concept of expected conditions for individual eco-regions.